Muslims in Selection Board

3513. SHRIAMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Muslim intellectuals, N.G.Os and academicians have demanded that there should be at least one Muslim on each Selection Board that conducts recruitment tests;

(b) whether they have also demanded proportionate representation in Government services including defence forces; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) to (c) Instructions had already been issued in 1990 to provide that wherever a Selection Committee/Board exists or has to be constituted for making recruitment to ten or more vacancies in Group 'C or Group 'D' posts/services, it shall be mandatory to have one member belonging to minority community in such Committee/Board. The Union Public Service Commission was also requested to follow this practice in respect of recuritment to Group A' and Group 'B' posts/services.

A National Commission to recommend measures for welfare of the socially and economically backward sections among the religious and linguistic minorities, including reservation for them in education and Government employment, has been constituted *vide* Resolution dated 29th October, 2004.

Security of Indian Workers in Afghanistan

3514. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Indian engineer working in Afghanistan was kidnapped and beheaded by the Talibans recently;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Indians working in Afghanistan are being targeted by Taliban extremists;

(c) if so, the security scenario in Afghanistan;

(d) whether the neighbouring country hostile to India and which has an influence over Talibans is secretly targeting Indians through Talibans; and

(e) if so, the steps Government propose to take to provide adequate security to Indian workers in Afghanistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) : (a) Yes. An Indian engineer Shri K. Suryanarayan, working in Afghanistan for a private company was kidnapped and killed by the Taliban on 29th April, 2006.

(b) to (e) All foreign nationals, including Indian nationals, face security threats in Afghanistan. Government of India maintains regular interaction with the Government of Afghanistan and the international security forces operating in Afghanistan to share information on security threats to Indian nationals in Afghanistan. Indians engaged in Government of India aided projects are provided security by the Governments of Afghanistan and India and those with international agencies, private companies and the Government of Afghanistan are provided security by their respective employers. Despite elaborate security measures, foreign nationals, including Indian nationals, have occasionally lost their lives on account of the activities of anti-government elements, including the Taliban, in Afghanistan. There are reports in the local media as well as other circles that the Taliban receive support from across the border.

Bilateral Relation with China

†3515. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and China had bilateral talks, recently,

(b) if so, the details of the issues discused; and

(c) the progress of the talks in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.